



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

**Testimony for Board of Education Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. item IV.A; General Business Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. item V.B.**

1 message

Lynn Otaguro <lmotaguro@yahoo.com>

Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 4:01 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

January 19, 2021

Board of Education
State of Hawaii

Re January 21, 2021

BOE Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting at 11:00 a.m., Item IV.A. Committee Action on Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending

BOE General Meeting at 1:30 p.m., Item V.B. Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending

Honorable Chair Payne and members of the Board:

In determining the DOE budget, effective planning must still consider COVID-19 issues.

Given the likelihood of ongoing concerns, health and safety issues will still haunt our schools.

Some of these issues can be addressed with little or no additional funding.

Masks. One low cost action that can be taken is amending the DOE mask wearing guidelines to be consistent with the Governor's emergency proclamation and the CDC and DOH guidance. In addition, the DOE can work on clear messaging about the importance of wearing masks and consistent enforcement of mask wearing in all of our schools.

Community education and professional development on COVID-19 issues. Community education and professional development on COVID-19 and the importance of following health and safety protocols also would strengthen the COVID-19 response. The delegation of authority on COVID-19 plans to individual schools and complexes without more oversight of health and safety issues has led to uneven application of health and safety protections, depending on different administrators' understanding of the disease and its transmission. Recently, Waialua High School held assemblies in spite of DOE guidelines against large gatherings. Surely, if there were a greater awareness about COVID-19, an administrator would not have pursued such assemblies. In news articles, reference was made to ceiling fans as a mitigating safety measure, when recent research indicates that ceiling fans could be a problem, actually spreading the disease.

If the DOE would like assistance with COVID-19 education for staff and families, there are community groups who are more than willing to donate their time. Other resources, such as a free

John Hopkins course on COVID-19 offered on the Coursera website, are available. These things, that involve little additional financial resources, can be done to improve schools' health and safety response.

In the DOE budget, priority must be given to the staffing necessary for in person instruction.

As this Board has stated previously, in considering questions of funding and budget cuts in education, the core functions of teaching and learning must be protected. This means funding the teachers and staff in our schools. For in person instruction during this time of COVID-19, teachers and staff are critical for implementing health and safety protocols and to ensure lower numbers of students in classes and social distancing.

Core classroom instruction should be protected. In its proposal for the use of federal funding, the DOE asks for approval of \$53 million for private tutoring to address students falling behind during this pandemic. However, it does not make sense to pay for tutoring while cutting monies and personnel dedicated to core classroom instruction. Will it be helpful to have tutoring when the number of students in classrooms are higher and where the resources for classroom instruction are impaired?

Resources kept in the schools are better in the short and long term. In the alternative, if it is determined that tutoring is the preferred route, it should be done through the schools rather than private contractors. Schools already know their students and instructional programs, and can better plan strategies and coordinate services in line with known needs, curriculum, and practices. Much of the effectiveness of programs relies on the relationship between a teacher and student; school staff members already have relationships with their students.

Further, keeping resources in the schools better maintains their effectiveness and viability going forward. If they do the tutoring themselves, schools will have the information on planning and results of the tutoring program, and will be better able to use that information in their other classroom and instructional decisions. In addition, there is a benefit in keeping teachers and staff in place within the school to better retain them for future needs. If tutoring is the preferred path, schools should be funded to do the work, rather than private contractors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lynn Otaguro
Oahu, Hawaii



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Board meeting 1/21/21 Testimony on iiaa and IV A and B general meeting

1 message

Cheryl B <burgharc@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 4:17 PM

To: Testimony BOE <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony for 1/21/21 BOE meeting.

*To question and challenge the status quo, proposals or purpose of plans does not mean one is against them, it means that one is helping and hoping that everyone will dig deep to find the best solutions. They are not always found by looking in a box. Sometimes there is no box and it's important to look for spaces and places with no confinements to what we can achieve. We find them by including even those public school supporters who give us our greatest thought challenges**

9:30 Human Resource committee testimony iii A:

1. BOE strongly considers the paths that put the least amount of impact on the folks who work directly with students. The hierarchy of cuts should start from those farthest away from actually being with students. Are DOE admin./ CAS and those at district offices important, many, yes... but we need all hands on deck in the classrooms. I am sure that many paths have been researched but they appear to be using the same old formulas and methods. There are teachers that need to fill gaps and be in classrooms NOT in coaching or CAS offices right now.

2. BOE strongly considers whether the cuts apply equitably to all geographic areas. While on paper, it may appear to be so, we all know that some schools have an economic base that helps them fill in the gaps in their schools from community support \$\$\$. The squeaky wheel often has greater access to additional paths. It also does not address the transfer and movement of educators from those schools who need solid, strong, consistent people (a recurring problem in the DOE) which will affect students. This brings up the pay differentials. Let's find ways to keep them since we know they are working.

3. Cuts are also not addressing other issues for our keiki. Lack of wifi and resources received, continued exposure to racist, biased resources and health/welfare services.

4. Waiting for the federal government monies has not worked in the past, it most likely won't work this time either. THAT being said, I would ask that the BOE pull back on the use of the CARES monies until a complete review is held, looking at HR 133 and Sec. 317. Please make sure that we have reviewed every possibility.

5. We need to find permanent positive solutions. What happened to an outside committee of community folks to work with the BOE? There are very qualified people willing to help. If the same people are always talking together, then they only bring forth what they already know. Change the lens.

General Meeting IV A *

1. Regarding the Superintendent. When Dr. Kishimoto began, I saw possible strengths in sharing, willingness to learn about Hawai'i and to support the educators. Her experiences, I thought would provide a positive path forward for our schools. Over the past year, though, my confidence in her ability to take our DOE where it needs to be has eroded. During the COVID year, I had hoped to see her use her connections, intelligence and experience to lead us through this challenge. I regret, it seems that we have a leader who has been retaliatory and concerned about the connections to the politics of it all. I understand this is my lens' view but feel it important to share. Since COVID and her horrible handling of the Acellus online curriculum fiasco, many of us have lost confidence that the supt. is able to carry us forward into the DOE Hawai'i place-based, unique piko of learning for which the community aspires. We can not continually depend on solutions from the continent and western thinking on these islands. Though we are in a budget crisis, where is the first place the DOE looks for help? It's not the community here for sure. We have folks who have created and are creating management systems and resources here on these islands. How many are being considered? Did anyone look at what places like Japan in Asia are doing to help with schools and finances? The Ministry of Education is looking at partnerships for keeping people working in schools and business. Lastly, the morale of educators and community is the lowest I have seen in a long time. Firing teachers, then suggesting the use of private tutors, that's the path to the destruction of public school, it is a business model, not a Hawai'i model. Teachers have taken a lot of the blame for a system that is letting them down, not the other way around. Yes, we are in harrowing times but you don't turn on and exclude the folks who are the lifeline to education, the keiki and the community. Leadership means more than just the budget and politics, we need a strong leader right now.

General Meeting IV B.

I have read through and reread the presentation sent by the Supt. to the BOE regarding Acellus.

Direct comments to the report.

#1 Communication was inconsistent to the schools, implementation and procedures following directive from BOE also inconsistent, Supt. communication unapologetic nor helpful. What is this *"the HIDOE will work closely with schools to move forward expeditiously to allow schools and families who want to discontinue using Acellus to transition to another program. The HIDOE is committed to minimizing disruption to students and families to the greatest extent possible."* for example. This appears to give permission to continue Acellus. It has been shared that some schools are receiving grants to do so. THE REASON it is policy to not use is that it is racist, biased materials, this doesn't change with who pays for it. As others have written to you in their testimonies, schools are using it and Acellus appears still on many school websites. We have also not heard about how the "vendors" will be helping to get monies back paid for Acellus. This should be a priority with the DOE and perhaps the Attorney General's office?

#2 While it's great that Acellus has begun to be addressed, what about the other online programs with similar or unacceptable content? This week, I had a parent point out to me inappropriate content from Teen Biz and Achieve 3000. Who is looking at the content on those sites as well as reviewing the other resources currently in use? Who vetted the new K-12 program that we were told is being piloted? We ask and ask but get no responses. Has there been discussion of the use of the 1776 Patriot curriculum? If not, there needs to be. There needs to be a policy decision on it immediately. What has happened to the strongly place-based Nā Hopena A'o and Hā? This is the direction we should be headed for our islands.

#3 Excited to see and learn more about the curriculum management system. How many school educators are actually involved in its inception? It would seem that the more who are working in it now, the less time and \$\$ will be needed for "professional development". Is it being piloted right now and how does it factor in the Hawaiian language use?

Unlike my usual testimony, this got a bit long so here is the summary:

1. Review and come up with a way to keep all educators in jobs with current pay and status. Work with the legislature on finding new and innovative ways to fund our schools. Review the Corona Cares policies and procedures before continuing further. Ensure that all schools are receiving equitable response during these challenging times.
2. Strongly consider whether Dr. Kishimoto's leadership style and direction is in the best interest of our schools and keiki.
3. Reaffirm to the community that Acellus and any other racist, biased, Eugenic-leaning resources will not be allowed in our public school classrooms. This includes the 1776 Commission. Set up policy, procedures and oversight to ensure that this occurs.
4. Remind the DOE administration, BOE and others that these are the Hawai'i Public Schools in the islands of Hawai'i and our focus should always be place-based for our keiki.

Thank you for reading this testimony submission.

C. Burghardt

Retired DOE Educator



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony - Liz Ho/United Public Workers - BOE 1/21/21 Meeting

1 message

Kahele Naeole <knaeole@upwhawaii.org>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Tue, Jan 19, 2021 at 5:50 PM

Aloha,

I am submitting the testimony below on behalf of United Public Workers Administrator Liz Ho regarding:

State of Hawaii Board of Education
General Business Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2021

Action Item B: Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

William "Kahele" Naeole, Jr.
Communications OfficerUnited Public Workers, AFSCME, Local 646, AFL-CIO
[1426 N. School St.](#)
[Honolulu, HI 96817](#)
P: (808) 847-2631 Ext. 224
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STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF EDUCATION
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
Thursday, January 21, 2021
1:30pm
Virtual Meeting

Re: Action Item B – Board Action on Finance and Infrastructure Committee recommendations concerning Department of Education's plan for use of federal funds in the new COVID-19 relief package and annual federal spending bill.

Dear Chairperson Payne and Members of the Board of Education:

The United Public Workers Union, AFSCME Local 646, represents approximately two thousand employees who work for the Department of Education and are tasked with keeping our schools clean and maintained and providing adequate health services to students statewide. Our members also include food service workers who feed our students, as well as trade employees such as electricians, plumbers, mechanics and our

lawn mower crews and house parents.

Addressing the health and safety of the community has always been a fundamental role for public employees. It has consistently been a central factor in determining budget and other major decisions. Therefore, the United Public Workers Union, AFSCME Local 646, strongly opposes any budget adjustments that would result in reducing the number of essential employees, especially those employees that have been designated essential for the purposes of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

Reductions to funding, which lead to the reduction in essential staff positions, will contribute to staffing shortages and its consequences. This will jeopardize the health and safety not only of the school community, but of the general community as well. This dynamic will result in outbreaks of the virus which will lead to increases in the number of actual cases and greater spread through the community. These consequences were demonstrated earlier with outbreaks at the State's correctional facilities, which involved staffing shortages.

Any funding decisions that decrease the number of critical staff positions moves us in the wrong direction, especially at a time when the number of cases in Hawaii are hitting higher levels. In order to protect the interests of the school and of the general community, we need to ensure that essential positions are maintained, and we need to have funding to provide for adequate protective equipment.

Congress will be deliberating over President Biden's 1.9 trillion dollar funding package, which includes additional financial resources for educational needs. This funding will be necessary to meet budget shortfalls for the Department of Education, as well as to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. The Board of Education and the Department of Education must do whatever it can to further the likelihood that Congress will approve the President's funding package.

Based on the foregoing, the United Public Workers Union, AFSCME Local 646 strongly opposes any recommendation that further reduces funding for essential employees, lessens the number of staff positions for such workers, or fails to provide for the protective equipment they will need.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Ho
Administrator
United Public Workers / AFSCME Local 646



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Alexandra Obra <alexandra.obra@k12.hi.us>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 7:14 AM

Hi!

I am submitting testimony for Thursday's BOE meeting, 1/21:

Alexandra Obra
Waiāhole Elementary School
Principal

My testimony is for the General Meeting and Finance Committee.

Thank you!

Ms. Obra

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'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kokua aku kokua mai; pela iho la ka nohana 'oha
"Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped, such is a family relationship"
Mary Kawena Pukui

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**BOE Testimony Letter 1-21-21.pdf**

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**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Waiāhole Elementary School
48-215 Waiāhole Valley Road
Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i 96744

January 20, 2021

Dear Hawai'i Board of Education Members,

My name is Alexandra Obra, Principal of Waiāhole Elementary School. I am writing this testimony letter to share my thoughts about the impending budget cuts.

These budget cuts have had a profound impact on my small school. Each year, my goal is to protect and maintain the status quo with all of our school positions (i.e., teachers, office, custodians, educational assistants, cafeteria, and casual hires.) They are not just school positions, they are family. We are a tight-knit 'ohana and community.

Waiāhole barely has the resources that we need to function properly, but we make do with what we have because although we may lack in numbers, we are never at a loss for spirit and pride. I cannot continue to make any additional cuts as they will severely impact student outcomes, and our community does not deserve any additional disappointments.

I cannot let these budget cuts continue in good faith without expressing my disappointment. Our keiki deserve someone to advocate for them, and I will continue to do so. It is well documented and studied that money invested in early education leads to higher graduation rates, and higher graduation rates lead to a reduction in crime. As Members of the Board of Education, you know these statistics. You understand the correlations between crime and education. You know that an investment in our children is literally an investment into our future. It's an investment in our community. For our school, it's an investment into the Native Hawaiian population that has already been marginalized enough.

It's time to reinvest in our schools. Budget cuts for schools is not the answer. The keiki of Waiāhole deserve equitable funding and resources to ensure that they are prepared for their future. Education must be our priority. We need to find ways to preserve and fund what matters the most, our keiki and their futures. I urge you to preserve teaching and non-classroom teaching positions that impact our keiki across the State of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Obra

Alexandra Obra
Waiāhole Elementary School
Principal



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

HE'E Testimony for HR Committee, FIC Committee and GBM, January 21, 2021

1 message

Cheri Nakamura <cheri.nakamura@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 20, 2021 at 8:56 AM

To: Board of Education Testimony <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

Please see attached HE'E's testimony for the HR Committee Meeting, FIC Committee Meeting and the GBM, January 21, 2021.

Regards,

Cheri Nakamura

HE'E Coalition

3 attachments**HE'E Testimony HR Meeting 01 21 2021.pdf**

143K

**HE'E Testimony FIC Meeting 01 21 2021.pdf**

188K

**HE'E Testimony GBM 01 21 2021.pdf**

126K



January 21, 2021
General Business Meeting

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

IV. A. Update on Superintendent's evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year: mid-year review of progress on Superintendent's Priorities

We would like to comment on item IV.A.

We appreciate the Superintendent's detailed self-review of her progress toward the Superintendent's Priorities. Particularly for Professional Standards (Component 1), she listed many examples of tasks and activities she has accomplished during the 2020-2021 year. The list of accomplishments is extensive; however, we believe a critical component of her evaluation is seeing improvement in clear, objective, measurable (quantitative) criteria. Superintendent Priorities (Component 2) is a start, as the priorities have clear and measurable goals. We look forward to the end of the year evaluation when the data in the measurable criteria will be available.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawai'i
Alliance for Place Based Learning
American Civil Liberties Union
Atherton YMCA
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
*Education Institute of Hawai'i
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawai'i
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*HawaiiKidsCAN
*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Education Association
Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
* Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Junior Achievement of Hawaii
Kamehameha Schools
Kanu Hawai'i

*Kaua'i Ho'okele Council
Keiki to Career Kaua'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
Learning First
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
Native Hawaiian Education Council
Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Punahou School PUEO Program
Special Education Provider Alliance
*Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu

Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*